

REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Councillor Saima Afzal

**PORTFOLIO COORDINATING
DIRECTOR: David Fairclough**

Complaints Update to the Standards Committee

The Committee received an update on complaints received regarding Members Conduct under the Arrangements for dealing with complaints about the `Code of Conduct for Members`. The report covered the period up to Friday 5th October 2018. The Committee will be kept up to date on complaints received throughout the year, how these are being dealt with and outcomes.

Work Programme for the Committee

The Committee re-considered the work programme following the recent publication of the outcome of national government consultation on `Updating the Disqualification Criteria for Councillors and Mayors` and added to the programme a review of the Council's policy on the application of the Disclosure and Barring Service provisions for Councillors.

The Committee also revised the programme for the Member Strategic Development Session (3) held on 12th November 2018 to include a session on how councillors should respond to unwarranted and unreasonable e-mail correspondence.

Protocol on Member to Member Relations

At previous meetings the Committee had agreed revised a Protocol on Member/Officer relations. The current Protocol was approved by Council and is contained in the Constitution of the Council.

As reported to Council Forum in October, at their meeting in July, the Committee considered its priorities for a work programme for meetings in 2018/19. The committee identified that it was keen to consider the drafting of a Member/Member protocol to compliment the Member/Officer protocol in the constitution.

It was noted the general expectations of elected councillors are set out in the Constitution – i.e. in the Members Code of Conduct and that each individual councillor has a responsibility to comply with the Code of Conduct and its supporting Guidance. The Code is far ranging and covers matters from personal probity and integrity, to matters relating to interpersonal relationships and how others should/should not be treated.

At their meeting on 25th October 2018 the Standards Committee discussed the adoption of a new Member to Member Protocol to compliment the Member Code of Conduct. The Committee was keen to ensure that the introduction of a Protocol could not be seen as intending to deter from robust political argument and debate, but did ensure clarity on the expectation on all councillors to conduct themselves with honesty, integrity and respect in dealings with others, certainly avoiding any behaviours which could be deemed as bullying, abusive or discriminatory in any way.

If agreed by Full Council this Protocol would be inserted in the Constitution in Part 5, Section 1 immediately following the Member Code of Conduct, to provide a transparent expectation of the delivery of the intention of the Code of Conduct in respect of councillor to councillor engagement. The proposed Protocol is set out in Appendix A to this report.

Recommendation

The Standards Committee recommends to the Council the adoption of the Protocol on Member to Member Relations as set out in Appendix A to this report.

Councillor Saima Afzal
Chair of the Standards Committee.